

I am providing this written testimony in reference to HB 6884 - An Act Concerning the Recruitment, Retention, and Enhancement of the Teaching Profession.

I have been a certified educator in the State of Connecticut since the 1990/1991 school year, almost 33 years, and I am horribly disappointed to see that HB 6884 does not include a COVID Benefit Enhancement for those of us who are planning to retire before 2026. We, along with all of our other colleagues employed during the pandemic, deserve to be recognized for our service during such unprecedented times in education.

As we transitioned to remote learning during the pandemic, the vast majority of my standard work days were 12 to 15 hours long. I also worked many hours each weekend. This continued as we shifted into hybrid models at a time when many individuals in other professional fields still worked remotely. It was an uncertain period and many of us, particularly those of us who were at greater risk due to our age, were concerned about the potential ramifications of exposure to COVID. However, we went back to school buildings while risking personal illness because it was in the best interest of our students to do so. This is true whether we have been educators for 33 years or 3 years. All educators who served during the 20/21sy and 21/22sy should be recognized through this proposed legislation.

When I read HB 6884, it appears that my commitment to my students and to my profession during the pandemic hold no relevance when considering a COVID Benefit Enhancement, yet that of younger colleagues is deemed more important. This discrimination is unacceptable and disrespectful.

It is my hope that the Education Committee will revise HB 6884 to include current educators who will be retiring prior to 2026. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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